

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 5 and 6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, because of some informalities.

Claims 5 and 6 have been amended to overcome this rejection.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Further, minor changes have been made to the pending claims to place them in better form for U.S. practice.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3 and 6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2001-253218 (hereinafter, Suzuki). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is allowable at least because it requires that “each of the bulkheads being welded to the upper and lower plate members.”

In contrast, Suzuki merely discloses joining either one of the lower plate portion 11b or the upper plate portion 11c to the lower plate 9 or the upper plate 8. Accordingly, Suzuki fails to disclose or suggest the “bulkheads” as recited in claim 1.

Claims 2, 3, and 6, dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 3 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 3, dependent on claim 1, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claim 7 is allowable over the prior art of record.

Applicants also appreciate the Examiner's indication that claim 4 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 4 has been amended in independent form including all of the limitations recited in claim 1 to place it in condition for allowance.

A favorable determination by the Examiner and allowance of claim 4 is earnestly solicited.

Conclusion

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of the pending claims in the present application are respectfully requested.

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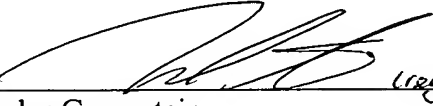
The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Reply After Final in that it raises no new issues. Alternatively, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Reply After Final in that it places the application in better form for Appeal.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi (#40,417) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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